

When April Conference Was Not Held In Salt Lake

Story of Fifty Years Ago Today and the Incidents Forming the Preface to Great Exodus.

TO ONE who would estimate how greatly the time element figures in the accomplishment of progress, now is a good time to look back for half a century, to the most trying year in Utah's pioneer era.

Conference throngs have steadily increased in number for a score of years, and with each session interest has grown keener, while the good things to report have waxed numerous. Just half a century ago, the valley in which the world may see today the achievements of the years between, was nothing but a dismal waste. There was no conference to be held, because the people were piling straw in their houses and were sharpening axes to cut down the trees with their own hands of rootage, and were investing in oxen for a long exodus to the south.

It was the year when the threatened war of extermination was being waged against the Mormon settlers, and conference time came before the people of the east had been stirred to action against the human sharks and politicians who ranged upon the world as birds of prey, and had called them off from their intention of making foot of the Utah settlements.

Because no historian of national repute has ever yet handled the facts of the expedition to Utah, it remains as a clouded chapter, and yet, if a complete light could be shed over the entire circumstances it would throw an invaluable mass of evidence upon both the spirit of the Mormon settlers, and the ultimate power of the government to enforce fair play, even against high officials, misusing the rights of their offices, and politicians, seeking to use governmental functions for private ends.

FLOYD'S POLICY.

For Secretary of War Floyd, who ordered the expedition west, no honor is given in national annals, for in a short time the fact that he was seeking to dissipate the Union forces in order to give the south a better chance against the north was to come to light, and he was to leave Washington to be followed by an indictment charging him with the theft of government bonds, while Camp Floyd was to be changed in name by a government order to Ft. Crittenden, in order that an unworthy public servant might not be honored in the name of an army post.

DRUMMOND'S INFAMY.

For Judge Drummond, who wrote the letter filled with falsehoods on which the justification for the expedition rested, there was to come disgrace, with the publication of the proof that he brought a notorious woman here as his wife, and that, too, at the instance of his legitimate spouse, who made public her indignation at his course. To this infamy was to be added the proof of his falsehoods by an examination of court records, he alleged had been burned, this examination being made by federal representatives themselves connected with the army which came to revenge the supposed insult.

KANE'S DEVOTION.

For Col. Thomas Kane, on the other hand, there was to be made a lasting and grateful name for his unselfish devotion to the cause of fair play and just treatment, in which he was aided by Capt. Van Vleet of the invading forces, by commissioners sent here to investigate, and by an outraged public opinion which rose in behalf of Utah as soon as the facts leaked eastward through the mesh of slander and infamous allegation made by the forerunners of those who now carry on the same kind of campaign, but who are rendered less potent by the facility with which fact may keep up with fiction in these days of more rapid news transmission.

The spring of 1858, in which events made it impossible to hold an April conference, saw the faith of the Mormon people put to its most rigorous test.

FLOYD, YOUNG AND PROPERTY.

"The accumulation of property," ran an anti-Mormon charge still familiar to dwellers in Utah, "is the heart of the Mormon religion." "Property," said Brigham Young, when spelling it out to Capt. Van Vleet of the invading forces, that his people would devastate their fair valley and flee to the mountains to refuge, and in the hope of preserving at least the gospel as they understood it to be handed down to the coming generations, "what do I care for property, except that it may serve the purposes of the Lord. If I am driven to the extremity I will burn every building, every foot of lumber, every house, every tree, and every particle of grass or hay that will burn. Before I will allow my property to be taken as I have in times gone by, I will utterly lay waste this land in the name of Jesus Christ, and our enemies shall find it as barren as when we came here."

APRIL, 1858.

At one time in the spring the early pioneers, with their families and herds, were on guard with their prepared arms, ready to fight, if they do their work, whenever a soldier turned to in the looking of the valley where a decade of pioneering was just finished. The people had gone south, they knew that to stay meant destruction. Their aim was to preserve as all those 70,000 souls as they could, and their hands were on their weapons and their eyes were on the horizon.

EXODUS OF SETTLERS.

Accordingly to the west the great mass of the Mormon people moved.

the nature of the map to no small extent, and had a direct influence in the elimination of Mormon settlements from Idaho, Nevada, and California, and the building up of many Utah communities, where a more restricted spreading out of settlements occurred after the exodus was over.

Before 1858 geographical boundaries in the west were not carefully regarded, and vast distances were a matter of small import. When the alarm was sounded through the breadth and length of the Mormon movement, it was accompanied by instructions from Brigham Young for all colonists to move in and be prepared to meet the crisis in a united manner, with the whole life of the Church thrown into one concentrated problem of continuing its existence.

EXODUS OF SETTLERS.

Responding to the call, the 8-year-old settlement at San Bernardino was broken up, and its people returned eastward to become the settlers of Parowan and Beaver. From the Jack and Eagle valleys in Carson county, Utah, prosperous settlements were abandoned and the people moved into Salt Lake, to afterwards spread out to northern and southern Utah points. Thus abandoned by the Utah settlers, the cutting off of the states from Utah was a matter to be accomplished without opposition, a few years later.

WELL KNOWN NAMES.

In the history of merchandising in Utah the year was a center of importance for all the old firms then had to make sudden changes.

Henry Dinwoody was forced to give up his Main street store and to establish himself in Provo canyon, making wooden shoe pegs. William Godbe did a signal service in riding with John Hunt, now of Snowflake, to Salt Lake in record time across the southwest desert. The two men conveying Col. Kane, an envoy for peace, to Salt Lake, after his long journey around the horn. From the trade which sprang up after the troops located at Ft. Crittenden, a group of merchants laid the foundations for large fortunes, and from the sale at auction of the immense store of munitions in charge of the troops when they left in 1861, \$4,900,000 in property passed into local ownership for \$100,000 in cash.

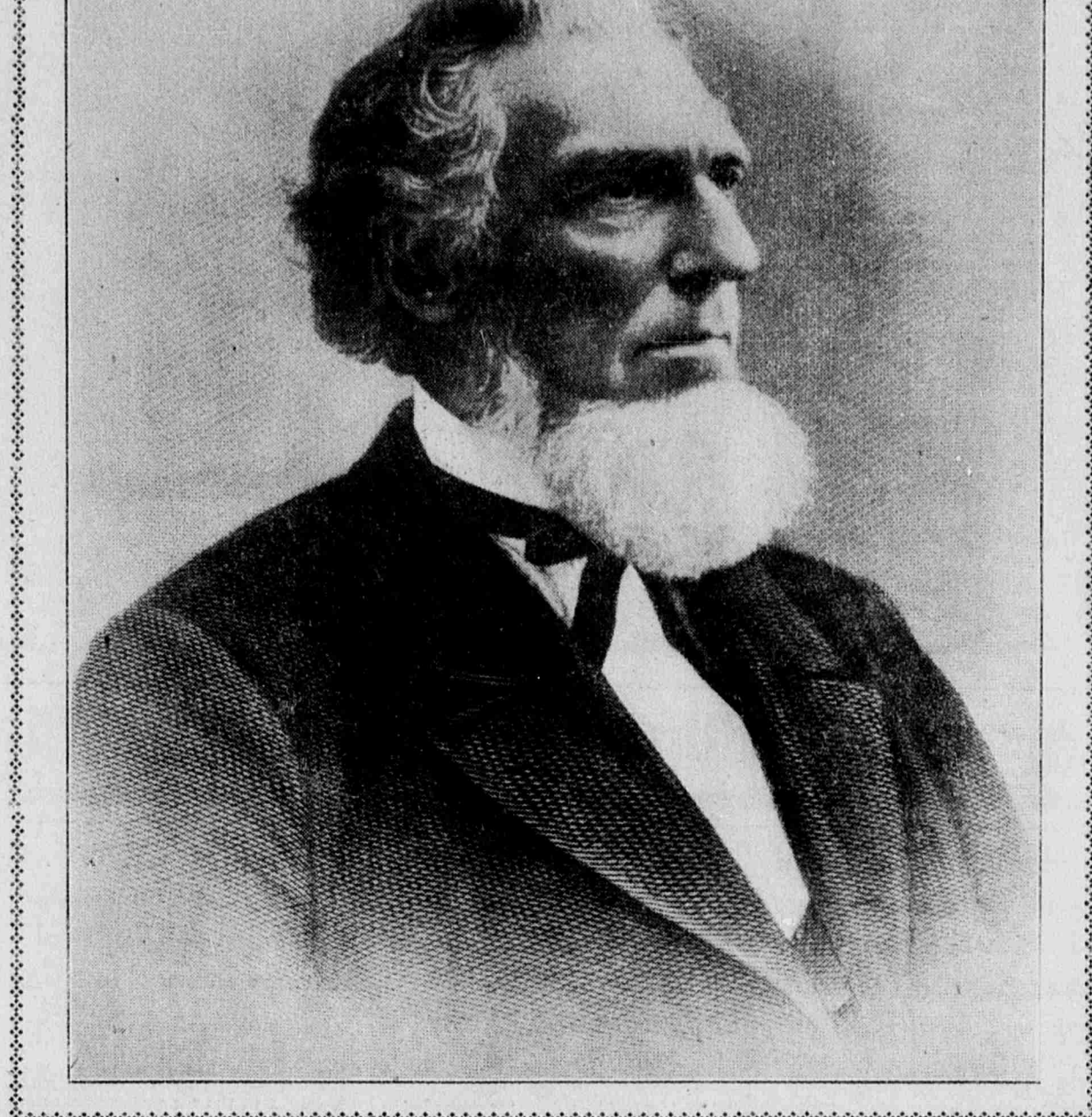
BETTER UNDERSTANDING.

As conditions settled towards peace in the summer of 1858 the world was left with a much better understanding of Mormonism than it had ever had before. President Lincoln came into office with such confidence in the Mormon leaders that he called upon them time after time for volunteer service in protecting the overland mail route and preserving the peace from border ruffianism, when all the federal troops were needed in the south.

THRILLING STORIES.

Nearly every Utah pioneer can tell a story of what he did in the summer of 1858, while in exodus from his home. Most of them were somewhere south of Provo, and north of the Colorado river, and many located themselves so firmly on southern canyon streams that they never again broke up their homes to return north.

"How horrible," exclaimed Mrs. Cumming, wife of the governor sent



GEN. DANIEL H. WELLS.

Who Commanded the Utah Militia During the Exodus from Salt Lake to the South.

to accompany Johnston's army, when she came into Salt Lake and saw the blocks of deserted homes piled with straw. "It has the appearance of a city infested by the plague. Can't something be done for the people who are marching away?"

"Yes," was the answer of the governor, who lived in Utah to win the admiration of every fair-minded citizen, and the hatred of those who could only subsist on any fare but fried Mormon on toast: "If I could only be in Washington for two hours, I am persuaded I could convince the government that we have no need for troops."

GOV. CUMMING'S REPORT.

The report that Gov. Cumming made is an important one, for it viewed affairs in Utah with an impartial, but extremely just attitude.

"The people," he wrote to the president and to Congress, "are moving from every settlement in the northern part of the territory. The roads are everywhere filled with wagons loaded with household furniture and provisions, the women and children often

without shoes or hats, driving their flocks they know not where. They seem not only resigned but cheerful. 'It is the will of the Lord,' and they rejoice to exchange the comforts of home for the trials of the wilderness. Their ultimate destination is not, I presume, definitely fixed upon. 'Going south' seems sufficiently definite for the most of them. Young, Kimball, and most of the influential men have left their commodious mansions without apparent regret, to lengthen the long train of wanderers."

The concluding sentence was characteristic. "I shall follow," it read, "these people and try to rally them."

HIS CONCLUSIONS.

For the putting of the brand of falsehood upon what Judge Drummond, predecessor of the present persuader ring Gov. Cumming's letter was important, for it made these conclusions:

1. The records of the supreme and district court which Judge Drummond had accused the Mormons of de-

stroying were perfect and unimpaired. 2. The legislative records and other documents belonging to the secretary of state were in perfect condition. 3. The territorial library, in charge of William C. Staines, was kept in most excellent condition.

4. People reported as being detained from leaving the valley, were really detained by their lack of resources for a trip east, and had been offered help in the nature of food and provisions. They were mostly people seeking other fields where labor was better recompensed.

CHARGE REFUTED.

A charge in Drummond's letter that the Mormons had killed Captain John W. Gunnison, after whom Gunnison island in Great Salt Lake is named, was refuted by survivors of the ill-fated surveyor's party themselves, who the set, received every hospitality from the settlers and finally had been killed by Indian marauders, as had also been half a dozen Mormons in the same year.

How the reaction against Utah's betrayers occurred in the east is an im-

Threatened War of Extermination to Be Waged Against the Early Mormon Settlers of Utah

portant chapter of the final story of that most critical period.

In the first place Col. Kane had been stricken with illness while in the Mormon camps at Winter Quarters at the beginning of their westward exodus. He had learned to know and trust them. When the swell of public excitement in the east was at its height, he personally went to President Buchanan and plead with him to be allowed to come west, as a government representative.

NEW YORK HERALD'S BOMB.

Meanwhile the New York Herald published this important paragraph: "Some of our contemporaries have been publishing long letters dated from Utah and containing heart-rending accounts of the sufferings inflicted on poor, helpless women by the brutality of the Mormon leaders. It is perhaps as well that the public should know that these letters are made up on this side of the Mississippi and we have no doubt do more credit to the imagination than the memory of their writers. No journal has a correspondent in Utah at the present time."

The statement was a thunderbolt into the camp of those who preceded the present Tribune coterie. When Col. Kane finished this long journey by steamer, and met Brigham Young, he encountered a little of the genuine Mormon pioneer spirit.

"Friend Thomas," was the governor's greeting for Col. Kane arrived in an enfeebled condition and on the verge of serious illness. "I want to take care of you. The Lord sent you here and will not let you die. No; you cannot die till your work is done. I want to have your name live to all eternity. You have done a great work and you will do a still greater work."

The reception preceded the heroic effort for peace by Col. Kane, which brought on the separation between Gov. Cumming and the military under his command, making him a force between the people and the army, restraining it, and once threatening to line the militia up against it to compel its obedience to his orders, a position which was heartily endorsed from Washington, in orders severely reprimanding the federal judges and the army's line commander.

THE THUNDERER ALSO.

As the eastern pendulum began its backward course the London Times suddenly discovered in the Mormons a "nation of heroes." "This strange people," it said, "are again in motion for a new home. We are told that they had left a deserted town and deserted fields behind them, for a home the locality of which is unknown to any but their leaders."

Does it not seem incredible that at the very moment when the marine scientists of Great Britain and the United States are jointly engaged in the grandest scientific experiments that the world has yet seen, 20,000 or 40,000 of the natives of these countries, many of them of industrious and temperate habits, should be victims of such abrupt impositions?"

NEW YORK TIMES.

The New York Times found itself suddenly willing to express the sentiment of the spectacle of the "voluntary" abandonment by 40,000 of their homes created by wonderful industry

in the midst of trackless wastes, after years of hardship and persecution, is something from which no one who has a particle of sympathy with pluck, fortitude and constancy can withhold his admiration. Right or wrong, sincerity thus attested is not a thing to be sneered at. True or false a faith to which so many men and women prove their loyalty by such sacrifices is a force in the world. We think it unwise to treat Mormonism as a nuisance to be abated by a posse committatus. It is no longer a social excrescence to be cut off by the sword. When people abandon their homes to plunge with women and children into the wilderness to seek new homes they know not where, they give a higher proof of courage than if they fought for them. When the Dutch submerged Holland to save it from invaders they had heartier plaudits showered upon them than if they had fertilized it with their blood. We have certainly the satisfaction of knowing that we have to deal with foemen worthy of our steel. If the conduct of the recent operations has been the means of driving away 50,000 of our fellow citizens from fields which their labor had reclaimed, and around which their affections were clustered we have something to answer for. Posterity should not be called upon to acknowledge with shame that our indiscretion, our ignorance, drove the population of a whole state from house and home, to seek religious liberty and immunity from the presence of mercenary troops in a part of the continent to which our rule was never likely to extend.

WONDER EXPRESSED.

From Reynolds' Newspaper came the positive language that Mormonism remained after every disparaging charge brought against it, "the most wonderful fact of the nineteenth century, and as such was entitled to respectful consideration. This new faith has put life under the ribs of death. It has, in the great majority of cases really improved the earthly condition of those who have embraced it. More than that it has inspired thousands of wretched and heart-broken persons who prior to their conversion seemed abandoned of God and man. It has given thousands of destitute Englishmen something to live for, and fight for, and if need be to die for. On this ground, then, were it for nothing else, the Mormons, not as fanatics or sectaries, but as heavily oppressed, long suffering, and earnestly struggling, are entitled to the sympathy of the enslaved classes throughout the world.

ENTITLED TO RESPECT.

"But they have a claim to something more than sympathy. Their heroic endurance and marvelous achievements entitle them to respect and admiration of their fellow creatures. Twice were the Mormons driven from their settlements in the United States before they were resolved upon their stupendous pilgrimage to the valley of the Salt Lake."

And thus it was on a summer morning in May, 50 years ago, that the army that had come west to conquer, marched through Salt Lake "with only the gurgle of the City creek to greet them," and under a solemn promise to march directly through the city and camp below it on the way to a station well removed from its proximity. One of the sublime incidents of the day was the fact that Lieut.-Col. Philip St. George Cook who had formerly commanded the Mormon battalion on its long march to Los Angeles, rode through the settlement that these same troops of his former command had helped to build, with bare head, out of respect for his memory of their service to the government he now had the honor to represent in a service of a different character.

SEED-GRAIN NEEDS.

Canadian Government Approaches Money to Aid Farmers.

Consul-General John G. Foster, of Oranay, advises that the finance minister of the Dominion government has presented a supplementary estimate to the Canadian parliament for the purpose of assisting western settlers of Canada whose crops failed last year to purchase seed grain during the coming season. The estimate includes items as follows: To provide \$285,000 to purchase seed grain for homestead settlers in Alberta and Saskatchewan, the cost of said seed grain to be repaid by the settlers with interest at the rate of 5 per cent per annum, and until repayment to be a lien or charge upon the lands of the settlers held under homestead entry.

To provide \$140,000 to enable the government of Canada to advance to the government of Alberta, by way of loan, a sum for the purchase of seed grain for settlers.

To provide \$1,825,000 to enable the government of Canada to advance to the government of Saskatchewan, by way of loan, a sum for the purchase of seed grain for settlers. This gives a total appropriation of \$2,250,000. It is understood that the seed wheat will be purchased in western Canada, but that part of the oats and barley will have to be secured outside of the Dominion.

AT THEIR BEST.

Over in Chelsea a school teacher was engaged in her task of teaching a class of foreign children the English language. She was trying to make her pupils understand the meaning of the word "right," and asked if any one in the class could give a sentence containing the word. A little girl, the reply of one little girl: "I have a sentence, teacher. We had right eggs for breakfast this morning."—(Boston Herald.)

Important Dates of the Salt Lake Exodus.

1857.

Jan. 30—Washington politicians received a formal document from the dissolute Judge Drummond, giving the basis of falsehoods, later completely proven to be so, on which to base an excuse for sending an army to Utah.

May 28—Secy. of War Floyd, secretly in league with the dissolute Judge, ordered practically the whole American standing army to Utah, hoping, it is now thought, to scatter the forces that the south would be benefited. A ammunition and arms sufficient to equip an arsenal were sent with it.

June 12—Senator S. A. Douglas in an intemperate speech at Springfield, Mass., used the Drummond letter as the basis of an argument for exterminating the Mormons.

July 24—The people of Utah received word that the army was coming, while engaged in celebrating the 24th of July, and the harvesting of the first good crops, at the head of Big Cottonwood canyon.

Aug. 1—The policy of fleeing to the mountains and trying to survive the threatened war of extermination was agreed upon, together with the policy of laying waste the efforts of a decade of pioneering.

Aug. 14—Carson valley settlers, who, in common with all colonists and Church

missionaries, had been called in, arrived at Salt Lake.

Aug. 15—Col. Robert T. Burton with 20 men left for the east to observe the approach of the U. S. forces.

Aug. 28—Col. Albert Sidney Johnston succeeded General W. S. Harney in command of the expedition. He afterwards became an officer in the southern forces during the Civil war.

Sept. 18—Delegates J. M. Bernheisel, and Capt. Stewart Van Vleet, both destined to play important roles in securing fair play for the Mormons, left Salt Lake for Washington.

Sept. 15—Gov. Brigham Young ordered militia to assemble in Echo canyon to protect the valley from assault while the people could prepare to desert their homes. General D. H. Wells assuming command at Echo canyon on the 29th inst.

Oct. 5—Lot Smith with a score of men burned two government wagon trains as a measure designed to show the desperate straits of the Mormon settlers and their determination to die in a manner other than being massacred in their own homes, the move having great effect in the east.

In turning settlement towards the Mormons, with a demand for fair play for them.

Oct. 10—The army was forced to turn back through the inclemency of the weather from a march via Soda

Springs into Salt Lake valley, going into winter quarters at Ft. Scott, 500 animals freezing to death before camp was established.

Dec. 4—Capt. John R. Winder went into camp for the winter at Echo canyon, where a small scouting party was kept of 10 men, to observe any effort of the invading forces to move westward.

1858.

Jan. 6—The Utah legislature, having approved all measures so far taken, petitioned Congress for justice and the protection of their rights.

Jan. 16—A mass meeting in Salt Lake framed an address to the country setting forth the true state of Utah affairs.

Jan. 19—Orson Pratt and other leaders in the European mission, and George Q. Cannon from California, arrived in Salt Lake pursuant to the call that all should assemble here to meet the crisis, with a united front.

Feb. 24—That a levain was beginning to work towards fair play was shown by the arrival of Col. Thos. L. Kane whom John Hunt and William Godbe had escorted from Los Angeles on horseback, in record-breaking time, his coming as an envoy from the president, to try to arrange for peace.

gan, as all eastern papers indicated the determination to make the Utah the seat of a new empire.

April 10—Toungueville was founded, by people moving south from Salt Lake.

April 19—Gov. Cumming, who had come in alone from the troops, sent a report to the president, showing up the falsehoods of the Drummond letter, and the needlessness for conflict in Utah.

May 5—The Deseret News issued its first number from Fillmore, Millard county, publication in Salt Lake having been suspended.

June 7—Ex-Gov. Powell of Kentucky with appointments as peace commissioner, arrived in Salt Lake, their appointment having followed a general belief in the east that the movement ought to have its present cognomen of "Buchanan's Blunder" or the "Contractor's war."

June 11—The commissioners met Brigham Young and others in the Court-house at Salt Lake. Brother Dunnbar was called upon to sign "Zion," on the receipt of word from Porter Rockwell that the army was on the move, contrary to agreement.

June 15—Terms of peace were agreed upon and the commissioners visited Provo, where they met about 4,000 people and addressed them in the bowery.

June 19—Col. Thomas L. Kane arrived

in Washington to report on the exact condition of affairs in Utah.

June 28—The army passed through Salt Lake, crossing the Jordan on the North Temple street bridge, and taking up its station at Camp Floyd, 49 miles from the city.

July 1—With first presidency and a few leading citizens returned to Salt Lake, while the return to Weber county was commenced under the leadership of Lorin Farr.

Sept. 22—The Deseret News again began publication in Salt Lake.

1860.

Feb. 6—Secy. of War Jas. B. Floyd having now openly allied himself with the south, and having decamped with a large amount of government bonds, the name of the camp in Cedar valley was ordered changed to Ft. Crittenden.

July 1—The army was ordered, from Utah, and the great store of munitions of war was sold at ridiculously low figures, goods inventoried at \$400,000, being disposed of for \$100,000, at auction. The entire cost of the expedition was \$50,000,000. Trade with the troops here was the foundation of the Walker fortunes, and the Jennings and the Godbe incomes. Eastern army contractors, in league with politicians, reaped rich fortunes from the expedition.

June 19—Col. Thomas L. Kane arrived

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